

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
Ik oānkār sat̄ nām kartā purakh̄ nirbhāo nirvair akāl mūrāt̄ ajūnī saibhān̄ gur parsād̄.



The Sikh Bulletin

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EDITORIAL

SAT KARTAR

At the Singh Sabha International Canada conference in Brampton in September 2012, when the Constitution and By-Laws were being voted upon, only four of us among about sixty participants, voted against the requirement that all members of the Executive Committee be kesadhari.

In an earlier editorial I have expressed my views that on one hand we make a case, and rightly so, that in matters of religious scriptures there is nothing like the Guru Granth Sahib. All other scriptures were written by many authors and that too after the founders' passing. Guru Granth Sahib not only has the original scriptures by Guru Nanak and some of his successor Gurus but also the writings of Hindu and Muslim writers, who were not kesadhari. Guru Nanak's lifelong companion, a Muslim, Mardana, was also most likely a non-kesadhari, as his descendants are today.

We can truly describe GGS as a universal message. But over time the outward appearance for a Sikh has gained precedence. Hair has become so sacred that the SGPC went to court to get the definition of a Sikh as Kesadhari to deny admission to one of its Medical Colleges to a Sikh daughter who plucked her eyebrows and succeeded. SGPC should really have gone to Guru Granth Sahib instead.

Upon reflection, though, the decision of that conference made sense. It reminded me of Mr. Tohra's response when asked why women were not allowed to participate in sewa at Darbar Sahib. His prompt and honest answer was that it has become 'maryada' (tradition) now. He did not have a moment's hesitation in giving that response even though he must have known that the person whose institutions he was managing broke most of the 'maryadas' of the religion and the society that he was born into.

That event in that conference did put me on a course of serious thinking. The idea of Singh Sabha International had germinated at Roseville, California in December 2000. There it died but in Ontario, Canada it is doing a positive job of funding missionary graduates of the Missionary College in Ludhiana and preparing CD's on gurbani and other religious literature for mass distribution. Their work is confined primarily to Punjab and few other parts of India. Any attempt on their part to negate the significance of uncut hair would impede their effort back 'home'.

In another editorial I have stated that I became a confirmed agnostic at the age of twelve after reading 'Bachittar Natak' and 'Bale-dian-Sakhian' to practice reading and writing Panjabi at home and reading 'Mahabharat' and 'Ramayan' from the middle school library. Being born into a Sikh household I had uncut hair when I arrived in this country in 1960 at the age of twenty-six but within four months I was clean shaven.

That lasted until 1997 when Bhai Jeewan Singh and Ripudaman Singh Malik of Satnam Education Society of British Columbia, Canada came to the Roseville, California Gurdwara to hold summer gurnat camp. It was their earnest desire that I should serve the congregation in 'Sikhi Sarup'. I complied and even though now I have definite views on the matter and the Roseville Gurdwara has been closed since April 2005, because the *sangat* was not supportive of the reforms that we were introducing, I have no intention of cutting my hair because I consider them part of my culture, not a religious requirement.

I cannot reconcile with many practices of Sikhism today with what they ought to be, key among them the issues of *kes* and definition of a Sikh. These, just like any religion, are divisive. Guru Nanak was not a divider; he was a uniter. In an age when you ventured away from your neighborhood at your peril he travelled far and wide to every corner of India and to Ceylon, Tibet and Mecca beyond, regardless of what W. H. McLeod and his students assert.

Guru Nanak was born into a Hindu household but with that faith Sikhism shares almost nothing, not even the concept of One God. At a very young age he refused to wear the janeu (Hindu sacred thread worn by high caste males); discarded the caste system (a religiously sanctioned discrimination still entrenched in the 21st

century democratic India); preached against idol worship; recognized the equality of mankind; asserted the equality of men and women; condemned the Hindu practice of *Sati* (live immolation of widow on her husband's funeral pyre); instructed the women to discard veil; allowed widow and widower remarriage; rejected the then prevalent concepts of *karma*, after life salvation, *tapasya*, heaven and hell (after death), incarnation, 84 lakh juni (8,400,000 life forms) *yatra* to holy places, fasting, multiple gods and goddesses; and of course, unique only to Sikhism, wished '*sarbat da bhala*' (wishing well being of all, not just of oneself, one's own family or one's own country) in his prayers. **His was a faith of Universal Humanism.** I, therefore' am a Nanakpanthi as represented by the Gurbani of Shri Guru Granth Sahib ji.

To the above we should add that Guru Nanak was an **environmentalist** half a millennium ahead of his time.

ਪਵਣੁ¹ ਗੁਰੂ² ਪਾਣੀ³ ਪਿਤਾ⁴ ਮਾਤਾ⁵ ਧਰਤਿ⁶ ਮਹਤੁ⁷ ॥

Pavan gurū pānī pitā mātā dharat mahat.
Air¹ is like a Guru², water³ like a father⁴ and the Earth⁶ like the great⁷ mother⁵ (which provides all types of resources and food).

The quote above is taken from the article '**EARTH DAY, ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਮਹਤੁ, EARTH, THE GREAT MOTHER**' by Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD in the following pages of this issue.

The positions of Guru, Father and Mother are the most highly regarded in Indian culture. By associating those with the three most essential life support elements Guru Nanak wants people to show the same consideration to these elements as they do to the three human relationships. In other words, do nothing that will pollute them.

His mission was to spread the message of common origins and brotherhood of mankind and importance of truthful living. *Truth is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful living.* //5// AGGS, M 1, p 62. Religions can be changed, voluntarily or by inducements as in Christianity and by the sword as in Islam, but truthful living does not have to change with change in faith.

I firmly believe that Guru Nanak and Guru Granth are not for starting a new religion. Sikhism is a way of

life. Whereas religions compartmentalize people, Sikhism breaks those barriers.

An excellent example of that is the incorporation of writings of both Hindus and Muslims that are compatible with gurbani. It is true that the Christian Bible incorporates the Old Testament, the Jewish scripture, and Mohammed accepted the Jewish and Christian prophets; but that is all among the one family of Semitic people who shared common origins, culture and history. Christ himself was a Jew. His was a crusade for reform in the practice of Jewish faith that had come to be controlled by the Temple Priests. It was the rejection of Christ by the establishment Judaism that gave an impetus to what came to be known as Christianity. Islam, on the other hand, was an alien faith in the Indian sub-continent, with no common history or bond with the native religions of India. But Guru Nanak found fellow interpreters of Koran among Muslims and incorporated their writings to reinforce his views which had universal application.

Another issue that concerns me is the prevalent effort to claim Sikhism to be a revealed religion in league with the three religions of the Middle East. In my judgment that does not add any prestige to Sikhism. These three religions do believe in one God but each one has its own one God.

Jewish God discriminates among people as the Jews claim to be God's chosen people. This God, like other Semitic and Hindu Gods, demands human sacrifice, like Abraham's son; and when Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son, God becomes kinder and gentler God and asks Abraham to slaughter a lamb instead.

Christian God fathered a child from Mary and his son, Jesus, established his own religion, Christianity, and proclaimed that only those who believe in him will achieve salvation. Then his 'FATHER' allowed for him to be crucified for the sins of others; but then HE raises Jesus from the dead, on the third day, and gives him life.

Guru Nanak rejects all three fundamentals of Christian faith. Guru Nanak's Creator neither goes around fathering children from virgins, nor does anybody die for sins of others; each is responsible to face the consequences of his or her own actions; and once anyone dies it cannot be reversed, even by the Creator.

According to Guru Nanak only The Creator never dies but anything that has been created will surely die, even this Cosmos.

Mohammed's God chose not to talk to Mohammed directly but through an Angel, just as in the 19th century Joseph Smith who founded Mormon faith was to claim. But Allah did not instruct Mohammed to bring equal justice to women in Arabia, such as one man one wife. Nor did God forbid him to marry a child which in the 21st century would be called pedophilia, a criminal act. Mohammed not only had many a women as sex slaves but also was married to a dozen of them, including marriage to a six year old child and consummated that marriage when she was nine.

When people proclaim that there are similarities between Sikhism and other faiths on basic concepts, it makes me cringe.

Guru Nanak's concept of God is not the same as in the Middle Eastern religions where God (Male) dictates the Law and gives direction to the prophets (Male) nor is it like Hindu Gods who incarnate as humans (Men specifically). Although he incorporated into his Bani the multiple names for God in other religions, his personal word for the 'God' entity is '**Karta Purakh**' or '**KARTAR**', formless, ageless, and everlasting and devoid of human attributes.

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Ik oankār sat nām kartā purakh nīrbhau nīrvair
akāl mūrati ajūnī saibhaṅ gur parsād.

I would interpret this phrase, called 'Moolmantar' as:

'There is One and Only, a Singular Reality, called The Creator, that created Itself; It has no human attributes such as fear, enmity, limited life span, an image and therefore it does not communicate with the Prophets directly or through others, as the Semitic religions claim, nor does it incarnate as a human as Hinduism (actual term should really be Brahmanism) claims. IT can only be comprehended through knowledge.'

Thus Guru Nanak discarded the pre Nanak God

concept completely and unequivocally. Not only that, to press his point home even more strongly, in the very first verse in Jap that immediately follows the above 'Moolmantar' the Guru reasserts the basic truth:

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥੧॥

True In The Primal Beginning. True Throughout The Ages. True Here And Now. O Nanak, Forever And Ever True. ||1||

The word **KARTAR** in Punjabi and **CREATOR** in English come from the parent language, Indo-European. If one removes the vowels from both, the consonants in both languages are the same 'KRTR' and 'CRTR' and sound exactly the same. It might not be too far out to speculate that the Indo-European people, before they spread to the present geographical expanse from British Isles through Europe and Iran to the Indian sub-continent, developed the concept of a single Creator but as the time went on it evolved into multiple private single Gods. The man first showed his audacity by first creating a God and then having that God create man in HIS image.

I am told by one knowledgeable source that in Guru Nanak's time the greetings were '**Sat Kartar**'. The fact that Guru Nanak named his settlement **Kartar Pur**, the 'place to practice righteousness', further reinforces that and also the fact that he chose his own name for Bhagwan, Ishwer, and God and that name was '**Karta Purakh**'.

It is time for us to bring the teachings of Guru Nanak to the notice of the outside world. Best way to do that is through the medium of English first and then translation from English into other languages. What I think we need to concentrate on is to take advantage of the electronic media and use the pages of The Sikh Bulletin to coordinate the translation of the Bani of Guru Nanak into English. For sure there are several versions of it already but none of them do justice to what the Guru is saying.

I ask the readers of The Sikh Bulletin in the Diaspora to create a *dharamsal* in their own homes, become *missionaries* for Guru Nanak and let their computer be the channel of communication. Email to me one hymn of Guru Nanak and its English translation that you think is worthy of being brought to the notice of the population in the countries of our residences. We will

invite our readers' opinions, arrive at a consensus and then make it available for everyone to use.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EARTH DAY

ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤੀ ਮਹਤੁ

earth

THE GREAT MOTHER

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Concept of **Earth Day** was first proposed by John McConnell in 1969 at a UNESCO Conference in San Francisco. He proposed March 21, 1970, the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, which was proclaimed by Secretary General U Thant at the United Nations for its celebration.[8] However, US Senator, Gaylord Nelson proposed April 22, 1970. Later on it was designated as **International Mother Earth Day** in 2009 by a consensus resolution adopted by the United Nations.[7]

However, the importance of air, water and the Earth was realized by Guru Nanak (1469-1539) exactly 500 years before John McConnell could

think of it during 1969. Let us have a look into Guru Nanak vision about the importance of environment (air, water and the Earth) during 15th century:

ਗੁਰੂ² ਪਾਣੀ³ ਪਿਤਾ⁴ ਜਾਤਾ⁵ ॥

Paṁuṅ gurū pāṇī piṭ jāṭā.

ਉਦਰ⁶ ਸੰਜੇਗੀ⁶ ਧਰਤੀ⁷ ਮਾਤਾ⁸ ॥

Uḍar sanjogī ḍhartī māṭā.

Guru Nanak is advising the humanity:

Please consider⁵ the importance of air¹ as the

Guru²; water³ as the father⁴;

And the Earth⁷ as the womb⁶ of mother⁸, where everything needed by the humanity is produced with collective⁶ actions of air, water and Earth.

ਰੈਣਿ⁹ ਦਿਨਸੁ¹⁰ ਦੁਇ¹¹ ਦਾਈ¹² ਦਾਇਆ¹³ ਜਗੁ¹⁴ ਖੇਲੈ¹⁵ ਖੇ

ਲਾਈ¹⁶ ਰੇ ॥੧੦॥

Raiṅ ḍinas ḍuḯe ḍāḯi ḍāḯiḯā jag khelai khelaiḯ he.

॥10॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 1021.

Night⁹ and day¹⁰ both¹¹ are as female¹² and male¹³ nurses and the whole humanity¹⁴ plays^{15,16} in their laps. 10

AGGS, M 1, p 1021. [1]

Guru Nanak has further expanded the above philosophy about the importance of environment as a Sloka at the end of JAP – *The Essence of Nanakian Philosophy* at page 8 of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib and it is repeated again at page 146 but under M 2 instead of M 1 [2]:

ਪਵਣੁ¹ ਗੁਰੂ² ਪਾਣੀ³ ਪਿਤਾ⁴ ਮਾਤਾ⁵ ਧਰਤਿ⁶ ਮਹਤੁ⁷ ॥

ਦਿਵਸੁ⁸ ਰਾਤਿ⁹ ਦੁਇ¹⁰ ਦਾਈ¹¹ ਦਾਇਆ¹² ਖੇਲੈ¹³ ਸਗਲ¹⁴

ਜਗਤੁ¹⁵ ॥

Pavaṅ gurū pāṇī piṭā māṭā ḍharat mahat.

ḍivas rāṭ ḍuḯe ḍāḯi ḍāḯiḯā khelai sagal jagat.

Air¹ is like a Guru², water³ like a father⁴ and the Earth⁶ like the great⁷ mother⁵ (which provides all types of resources and food).

Both¹⁰ day⁸ and night⁹ are like female-nurse¹¹ and male nurse¹² and the whole¹⁴ humanity¹⁵ plays¹³ in their laps.

During Guru Nanak's time people were not polluting the air, water and the Earth as we are doing now, however, he was cautious to warn the humanity that they have to pay according to their activities (Good or bad deeds) so it is their duty to practice righteousness while living on the Great Mother Earth – **ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਮਹਤੁ**.

ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ¹⁶ ਬੁਰਿਆਈਆ¹⁷ ਵਾਚੈ¹⁸ ਧਰਮੁ*¹⁹ ਹਦੁਰਿ²⁰

॥

ਕਰਮੀ²¹ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ²² ਕੇ ਨੇੜੈ²³ ਕੇ ਦੁਰਿ²⁴ ॥

Changḯāḯiḯā buriḯāḯiḯā vāchai ḍharam haḍur.

Karmī āpo āpṅī ke neṛai ke ḍur.

Virtues¹⁶ (good deeds) and vices¹⁷ (bad deeds) of everybody are evaluated¹⁸ naturally under²⁰ the laws of righteousness¹⁹.

Therefore, everybody will be affected by their²² deeds²¹ whether they consider themselves close to God (religious mentors)²³ or away from God (atheists)²⁴.

ਧਰਮੁ*: Many theologians interpret **ਧਰਮੁ*** as the Dharam Raj who keeps an account of good and bad deeds of every person according to ancient mythology. But here **ਧਰਮੁ** has been interpreted as laws of righteousness – strictly observing the laws of morality.

ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ²⁵**

ਧਿਆਇਆ²⁶ ਗਏ²⁷ ਮਸਕਤਿ²⁸ ਘਾਲਿ²⁹ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ³⁰ ਉਜਲੇ³¹ ਕੇਤੀ³² ਛੁਟੀ³³ ਨਾਲਿ ॥੧॥

Jinī nām ḍhiḯāḯiḯā gaḯe maskat ḡhāl.

Nānak te mukh ujle ketī chhutī nāl. ॥1॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 8; ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 2, ਪੰਨਾ 146.

Nanak says:

The faces³⁰ of those, who have comprehended²⁶ Laws of Nature/Universe²⁵ and had²⁷ worked²⁹ hard²⁸ accordingly, will glow³¹ with happiness and attain liberation from their troubles. And many others³² can also be liberated³³ with the

association of such persons.

AGGS, M 1, p 8; AGGS, M 2, p 146.

Note: ** ਨਾਮੁ : It has been interpreted as ‘Laws of Nature/Universe’ since ਨਾਮੁ (*Naam*) has shown as ਹੁਕਮੁ (*Hukm* – meanings Laws of Nature/Universe)

by Guru Nanak:

ਏਕੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿ

ਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਆ ਬੁਝਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥੫॥

Èko nām hukam hai Nānak satgur dīā bujhāe jīo.
||5||

That only¹ Naam² has been deciphered⁵ as is the Laws of Nature/Universe³ by the true Guru⁴.

AGGS, M 1, p 72.

And

According to Guru Arjan ਨਾਮੁ (*Naam*) also means ‘Laws of Nature/Universe’:

ਨਾਮ¹ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ² ਸਗਲੇ³ ਜੰਤ⁴ ॥

Nām ke dhāre sagle jant.

All³ living beings⁴ are under² the Laws of Nature¹.

ਨਾਮ¹ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ² ਖੰਡ³ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ⁴ ॥

Nām ke dhāre khand barahmand.

All the galaxies⁴ and stars³ and planets³ are under² the Laws of Nature¹.

AGGS, M 5, p 284.

Here Guru Nanak explains that the Earth is the only Planet in our Solar System where all the natural resources, i.e. air, water and the necessary phenomena - day, night, and seasons; and the suitable environment for all the living beings are found. Guru Nanak advises to practice righteousness for peaceful life and to save this Earth (*Mata Dharat Mahat*) for coming generation of the humanity. The Earth (*Mata Dharat Mahat*) as a place to practice righteousness has also been explained by Guru Nanak in the Stanza 34 of JAP as follows:

ਰਾਤੀ ਰੁਤੀ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ॥

ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਪਾਤਾਲ ॥

ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਜਪੁ 34, ਪੰਨਾ 7.

Rātī ruṭī thiṭī vār.

Pavaṇ pāṇī agnī pātāl.

Fis vich dhartī thāp rakhī dharam sāl.

The Earth having energy in its center is a place, among air and water around it with day, night and different season, for the humanity to practice righteousness.

AGGS, JAP 34, p 7.

The Sikhs might have recited the above Sabds for hundreds of millions of times during performance of *Akhad Paaths* of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib and also while reciting JAP Bani all over the world but never realized the importance of air, water and the Earth to celebrate EARTH DAY. However, it was recognized by John McConnell in 1969 exactly after 500 years of Guru Nanak. John McConnell (1915-2012) is Peace Activist with passion for peace, religion and science.[3] Ironically the Sikh still could not recognize this realization of Guru Nanak until 2009 for another 40 years when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) initiated a program to help the world's religious traditions to create long-term plans to improve their relationship with the environment.[6]

Under that program the Sikh started their own **EcoSikh** project for celebration of **Sikh Environment Day** not on March 21 or April 22 but on March 14 the date when Guru Har Rai, the seventh Guru, succeeded to the House of Nanak.[6] But Encyclopaedia of Sikhism [4] and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar say it is March 3, 1644.[5] This credit was given to Guru Har Rai for his passion of preserving flowers since a few flowers were broken from a bush with his long robe which made him very sad. I wonder why the Sikh, responsible for creating Sikh Environment Day, ignored to give this credit to Guru Nanak for his

passion for peace, religion and science, the founder of Sikhi, who made the humanity aware of the fact that air is the Guru, water is the father and the Earth is their Great Mother who provides everything needed by the humanity. And it is the duty of the humanity to practice righteousness and protect them from pollution.

Now there is a big question:

Should the Sikh celebrate EARTH DAY as a great event with humanity of the world on April 14 or as Sikh Environment Day on March 14?

I may add here that April 22 is the most suitable date for the Sikhs because during the month of Vaisakh (April):

- Birthday of Guru Nanak falls on April 15.
- The Sikhs celebrate Vaisakhi on April 13/14.
- Moreover, Vaisakh is almost peak of the Spring Season – The cheerful season according to Guru Nanak:

ਨਾਨਕ ਵੈਸਾਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ² ਪਾਵੈ³ ਸੁਰਤਿ⁴ ਸਬਦਿ⁵ ਮਨੁ⁶ ਮਾਨਾ⁷

॥੬॥

Nānak vaisākhī'n parabḥ pāvai suraṭ sabad man mānā. ||6||

AGGS, M 1, p 1108.

Guru Nanak says use⁷ your mind⁶ to study Sabd⁵ attentively⁴ to understand³ God² during the month of Vaisakh - The peak of Spring Season when everything is cheerful.

(Note: The time of blooming of shrubs and trees is variable at different places. For example, in Quebec, Canada the plants are still in dormant stage while in Punjab the farmers have harvested their crops, and flowers of shrubs and trees are gone and now bearing fruits.)

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1. AGGS (ਅਗਗਸ) = Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (reprint). Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. M (ਮ) = Mahla, i.e., succession number of the Sikh

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THE CONCEPT OF HYPOCRISY (ਪਖੰਡ) IN GURBANI

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In this age of materialism, hypocrisy is prevailing in religious as well as in our worldly affairs. Every section of society has fallen victim to it. Many religious priests and political leaders have adopted it. We can find numerous fake holy men who use their religious dress and shallow religious knowledge to cheat and impress others. Desire to accumulate wealth and giving air to oneself seems to be its main cause. They pretend to represent God, create a large number of followers who blindly believe them and think that

they (imposters) can get them anything in the world. These cheats lead a luxurious life while their poor followers live on false hopes. Most of them have degraded the religious and ethical values.

Gurbani exposes and Snubs these hypocrites in the following quotes:

ਗਲੀ ਅਸੀ ਚੰਗੀਆ ਆਚਾਰੀ ਬੁਰੀਆਹ ॥
ਮੁਨਹ ਕੁਸੁਧਾ ਕਾਲੀਆ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਚਿਟਵੀਆਹ ॥
(Guru Nanak Dev Jee. SGGS: 85)

'We are good at talking, but our actions are bad. Mentally, we are impure and black, but outwardly, we appear white.'

ਜੀਵਤ ਪਿਤਰ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਕੋਊ ਮੁਏਂ ਸਿਰਾਧ ਕਰਾਰੀ ॥
(SGGS:332)

'He does not honor his ancestors while they are alive, but he holds feasts in their honor after they have died.'

ਬਾਹਰਹੁ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਸਦਾਇਦੇ ਮਨਹੁ ਮੂਰਖ ਗਾਵਾਰ ॥
(SGGS: 1091)

'Outwardly, they call themselves *Pandits*, religious scholars, but in their minds they are foolish and ignorant.'

ਮਾਥੇ ਤਿਲਕੁ ਹਥਿ ਮਾਲਾ ਬਾਨਾਂ ॥
ਲੋਗਨ ਰਾਮੁ ਖਿਲਉਨਾ ਜਾਨਾਂ ॥
(SGGS:1158)

'Some apply ceremonial marks to their foreheads, hold rosaries in their hands, and wear religious robes. Some people think that the Lord is a play-thing.'

Gurbani Dissuades us from Hypocrisy:

Gurbani admonishes so called holy persons who deceive innocent people by wearing saintly dress, apply ceremonial marks on their foreheads, and pretend to be talking to God while meditating. Gurbani tells them that meditation on the river banks, penance in the forests or visiting pilgrim places, keeping fasts or taking bath at holy tanks is of no use if their mind is not pure :

ਕਿਆ ਜਪੁ ਕਿਆ ਤਪੁ ਕਿਆ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਪੂਜਾ ॥
ਜਾ ਕੈ ਰਿਦੈ ਭਾਉ ਹੈ ਦੂਜਾ ॥
(SGGS:324)

'What use is chanting, and what use is penance, fasting or devotional worship, to one whose heart is filled with the love of duality?'

ਕਾਹੇ ਕਉ ਕੀਜੈ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਜਪੰਨਾ ॥
ਜਬ ਤੇ ਸੁਧੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਮਨੁ ਅਪਨਾ ॥
(SGGS: 485)

'Why do you practice meditation and chanting, when your mind is not pure?'

ਕਾਂਇਆ ਮਾਂਜਸਿ ਕਉਨ ਗੁਨਾਂ ॥
ਜਉ ਘਟ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਹੈ ਮਲਨਾਂ ॥

(Bhagat Kabeer Jee.SGGS: 656)

'Why do you bother to wash your body?
Your heart is still full of filth.'
(SGGS:905)

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਤੀਰਥ ਭਰਮੀਜੈ ॥
ਮਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਸੂਚਾ ਕਿਆ ਸੋਚ ਕਰੀਜੈ ॥

'With filth within, he wanders around at places of pilgrimage. His mind is not pure, so what is the use of performing ritual cleansing?'

ਦਿਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਪਟੁ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰੈ
ਕਿਆ ਹਜ ਕਾਬੈ ਜਾਏਂ ॥
(SGGS:1349)

'If someone has deception in his heart, what good is it for him to utter prayers? And what good is it for him to go on pilgrimage to Mecca?'

God Knows the Bad Intentions of a Hypocrite:

The holy Sikh Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, mentions the bad consequences of being an imposter. Hypocrites are told, in simple words, that Omniscient God will treat them as thieves for deceiving innocent people and their deceitful actions will be taken into account. It is useless to pray when their intentions are not good:

ਕਰੈ ਦੁਹਕਰਮ ਦਿਖਾਵੈ ਹੋਰੁ ॥
ਰਾਮ ਕੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਬਾਧਾ ਚੋਰੁ ॥
(SGGS:194)

'They do their evil deeds, and pretend otherwise; but in the Court of the Lord, they shall be bound and gagged like thieves.'

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਅਗਨਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਤਨੁ ਸੁਆਹ ॥
ਗਲਿ ਪਾਬਰ ਕੈਸੇ ਤਰੈ ਅਬਾਹ ॥
(SGGS:267)

'The fire of desire rages within; outwardly they apply ashes to their bodies. There is a stone around their neck - how can they cross the unfathomable ocean?'

ਖੋਟੁ ਨ ਕੀਚਈ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਪਰਖਣਹਾਰਾ ॥
(SGGS:461)

'Do not practice deception - God is the Assayer of all.'

ਸੀਸਿ ਨਿਵਾਇਐ ਕਿਆ ਥੀਐ
ਜਾ ਰਿਦੈ ਕੁਸੁਧੇ ਜਾਹਿ ॥
(SGGS:470)

'But what can be achieved by bowing the head, when the heart is impure?'

ਛੋਡਹੁ ਕਪਟੁ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਰਵੈਰਾ
ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸੰਗਿ ਨਿਹਾਰੇ ॥
(SGGS:1220)

'Abandon your deception, and go beyond vengeance; see God who is always with you.'

Disadvantages of Being a hypocrite:

Gurbani tells us that imposters can never get rid of the cycle of birth and death. They lose their game in this world and cannot attain peace of mind. They repent in the end:

ਅਵਰ ਉਪਦੇਸੈ ਆਪਿ ਨ ਕਰੈ ॥
ਆਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਜਨਮੈ ਮਰੈ ॥
(SGGS: 269)

'One who does not practice what he preaches to others, shall come and go in reincarnation, through birth and death.'

ਬਾਹਰੁ ਧੋਇ ਅੰਤਰੁ ਮਨੁ ਮੈਲਾ
ਦੁਇ ਠਉਰ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਖੋਏ ॥
(SGGS: 381)

'He washes outwardly, but within, his mind is filthy; thus he loses his place in both worlds.'

ਬਾਹਰਹੁ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਜੀਅਹੁ ਤ ਮੈਲੇ
ਤਿਨੀ ਜਨਮੁ ਜੁਐ ਹਾਰਿਆ ॥
(SGGS: 919)

'Those who are outwardly pure and yet polluted within, lose their lives in the gamble.'

ਚਕ੍ਰ ਬਣਾਇ ਕਰੈ ਪਾਖੰਡ ॥
ਝੁਰਿ ਝੁਰਿ ਪਚੈ ਜੈਸੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਅ ਰੰਡ ॥
(SGGS:1151)

'He applies ceremonial religious marks to his body, but practices hypocrisy. He wastes away in sadness and pain, like a lonely widow.'

A piece of Advice for Hypocrites:

Gurbani advises so called saints and hypocrites that hypocrisy will not take them near to God. They are told that only truth prevails, they should follow true teachings of the Gurus and give up hypocrisy:

ਛੋਡੀਲੇ ਪਾਖੰਡਾ ॥
ਨਾਮਿ ਲਇਐ ਜਾਹਿ ਤਰੰਦਾ ॥
(SGGS:471)

'Renounce your hypocrisy! Taking the Naam, the Name of the Lord, you shall swim across.'

ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਜੋ ਦੀਸਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਜਮੁ ਜਾਗਾਤੀ ਲੂਟੈ ॥
ਨਿਰਬਾਣ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾ ਨਿਮਖ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਜਿਤੁ ਛੂਟੈ
॥(SGGS:747)

'The religious rites, rituals and hypocrisies which are seen, are plundered by the Messenger of Death, the ultimate tax collector. Sing the Kirtan of the Creator's Praises selflessly; contemplating Him in meditation, even for an instant, one is saved.'

ਪਾਖੰਡ ਕੀਨੇ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ
ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਅਲਖੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥
(SGGS:1043)

'Practicing hypocrisy, meeting with God is not obtained; without the True Guru, the unseen Lord is not found.'

ਤਿਲਕੁ ਕਢਹਿ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕਾਲੇਖੰ ॥
ਭੇਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਨ ਲਭਈ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਚੀ ਸਿਖੰ ॥
(SGGS: 1099)

'They apply ceremonial marks to their foreheads, and take cleansing baths, but they are blackened within. They wear religious robes, but without the True Teachings, God is not found.'

ਛੋਡਹੁ ਕਪਟੁ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਰਵੈਰਾ
ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸੰਗਿ ਨਿਹਾਰੇ ॥
(SGGS: 1220)

'Abandon your deception, and go beyond vengeance; see God who is always with you.'

Let us Be aware of Such Imposters:

Gurbani advises us that hypocrite saints and *Babas* cannot lead us to God. We should keep ourselves at a distance from them and must not become a victim of their sweet talk and hypocrisy:

ਗਲੀ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਜਪਮਾਲੀਆ ਲੋਟੇ ਹਥਿ ਨਿਬਗ ॥
ਓਇ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਸੰਤ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਬਾਨਾਰਸਿ ਕੇ ਠਗ ॥
(SGGS:476)

They have rosaries around their necks, and they carry glittering jugs in their hands. They are not called Saints of the Lord - they are thugs of Benares.'

ਚਿਟੇ ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਕਪੜੇ ਮੈਲੇ ਚਿਤ ਕਠੋਰ ਜੀਉ ॥
ਤਿਨ ਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨ ਉਪਜੈ ਦੂਜੈ ਵਿਆਪੇ ਚੋਰ ਜੀਉ ॥
(SGGS:751)

'Those who wear white clothes (saintly attire), but have filthy and ruthless mind, they do not meditate on God as they are engrossed in duality; they are thieves.'

ਪਾਖੰਡ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਮਨਿ ਕਪਟੁ ਕਮਾਹਿ ॥
ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਰਮਈਆ ਨੇੜਿ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
(SGGS:1169)

'Their mind and eye practice hypocrisy and deception. The Pervading Lord does not even come near them.'

Conclusion

Hypocrisy is condemned by the Sikh Gurus who lived a saintly life. It does not succeed in the end. Gurbani has also warned us to save ourselves from cheats. May *Wahiguru* keep us at a distance from hypocrites. The task of uprooting hypocrisy and persuading these imposters to stop cheating their innocent followers is gigantic, but it must be checked.

HOW MUCH SIKH AM I

Bhai Harbans Lal

Questions Others Ask:

I cannot recall any one asking this question, "Was I a Sikh?" either during my childhood in Pakistan, or in India, after partition of 1947. There were two exceptions; one being at the time of census and the other at the time of school registration. It never worried me either, as more than once I was honored by the major Sikh institutions and was elected to serve as a leader of Sikh organizations and Sikh institutions.

If someone did ask me if I was a Sikh, I found no hesitation in answering "yes," in a persuasive tone. The question was undemanding, the answer was easy, and the matter was swiftly concluded.

After I migrated to North America the situation began to change. The frequency of grilling questions on the religious identification has increased in the past few years. The questions are evolving into rhetoric debates. When the question is rhetoric, lengthy answers are expected. Here is a trap; definitive answers are taken as pretentious and down-to-earth answers are considered

evasive. Anything in-between carries the failings of both of these.

Such questions are no surprise to me. I am a stranger to many, and not visibly recognizable as a Sikh; however, it is still not a big deal.

To a simple question, I politely answer in affirmation that I am a Sikh. If someone persists with additional questions, I further qualify myself as a *Sehajdhari* Sikh. The matter usually ends; except sometimes I may have to explain politely the meaning of a *Sehajdhari* Sikh.

Sehajdhari Sikhs are those who adopted Sikh religion, Sikhee, by choice often without being born in a Sikh family. For all purposes, they are devout Sikhs, professing Sikh religion, observing Sikh ceremonies, and considering themselves as an integral part of the Sikh society. They may not conform to the five Ks but believe in all institutions of Sikhism including *Khande di Pahul*. They have a long history of serving the Sikhs and Sikh institutions since the time of the Gurus. Quite a large number of the Sikhs who live outside Indian Punjab, including many outside India, belong to this category or denomination.

Question I Ask:

The situation changes completely, when I ask myself this question, "How much of a Sikh am I" and when the term Sikh is not a noun but an adjective or a verb. Then a probing of my own consciousness begins. It is accompanied by a stomach-churning experience. "Must it not be a lifelong probe and continuous prayer in humility?" I ask myself. The question then become not so easy to answer; nor is the answer that straightforward.

Sikh: A Noun, an Adjective, or a Verb?

To avoid un-pleasantries, clever linguists use plural for adjectives as well as nouns so that the distinction that I wish to make here is left to the subtlety and appreciation of the reader. This way the translator is unrestricted to choose from the imaginations.

But really there is a difference. The noun Sikhee is stagnant, the adjective dynamic. The noun is comforting, the adjective demanding. The noun asserts, the adjective pleads. The noun is worldly, the

adjective spiritual. That is why I make the fuss between “Sikh” and “a Sikh.” Certainly it becomes not a yes-or-no matter; the question becomes rather, “How much Sikh am I?”

I cannot be confident in laying claim to any large or small share of Sikh-ness and say, “Oh, I am very Sikh indeed.” That answer is both arrogant, and untrue. However, can I absolve myself by admitting that, alas, I am hardly Sikh at all? This is cowardly and considered irresponsible even though it may make me aware of how little Sikh I really am. Although discouraging, it gives me a powerful drive to strive that I ought to be more Sikh than I am.

Definition

To me the most important Sikh belief, or Sikh commitment, that I am asked to carry is to live according to the teachings of the Sikh scripture Sri Guru Granth Sahib. By the same belief all other requirements to be Sikh become derivatives. They may be more important when term Sikh is used as a noun.

Millions of Sikhs are endeavoring to follow the manifold teachings of our Eternal Shabd or “Word” Guru. It is a rude assumption to pick on one or the other beliefs/teachings to define someone; whether one is a practicing Sikh or not. That only causes misperception and unpleasantness.

If practicing all that our Eternal Guru is asking of us, defines a Sikh – then I am still seeking, learning and endeavoring. Those who can practice all of the teachings are really blessed and I must look up to them as soon as I can spot them. Only with their support and at the feet of the Shabd Guru that I become aware of how little Sikh I really am!

This gives me a haunting but powerful sense that I ought to be more Sikh than I am.

Dynamism:

As you can see, the answer to the question acquires a very dynamic quality. Because Sikhee is perpetual learning, and the response varies from day to day.

The first of my two questions “am I a Sikh” need to be answered usually once; a tick in the appropriate column of the Census report or the membership application of a local Gurdwara, that carries over from one year to the next. Most of my friends do not change their formal

“religion,” and neither do I. If someone asked me, “Are you a Sikh?” a decade ago, I should not expect him or her to repeat the question this year, unless my response was forgotten.

When the term Sikh is used as an adjective, “Am I Sikh?” it becomes more of a lifelong and living style issue.

Perhaps yesterday morning for a brief spell I was indeed fairly good Sikh in my starting of the day, with a deep sense of gratitude and thoughtful readings from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. I followed it by treating my fellow drivers with courtesy as I zoomed to my work. At work I was diligent and honest.

But I was perhaps poorly Sikh in the evening when I yelled at the cleaning lady at the office, and overlooked any courtesy to other drivers at rush hour.

How much Sikh was I yesterday when I saw a hungry homeless person standing in the heat of the Arizona sun and drove away in my air-conditioned car? How much Sikh was I last year when I voted in the American elections, on the issue of food stamps for the poor, rights of women, or banning the field mines?

Do you find that there are certain issues when you feel usually less Sikh in your dealings with other fellow humans? The issues are not only ethical: but in the deep, they are questions how Sikh am I doctrine-wise.

Was I truly Sikh as I spoke to the congregation last Sunday? Was the congregation truly Sikh when it formulated the election bye-laws to exclude others? How Sikh are we as we hammer out a hateful liturgy on comparative religion or on a religion of our neighbors?

For Sikhs Only:

A few years ago I was reading an article on a Sikh Gurdwara. I came across a sentence saying that the Gurdwara was a house of worship for the Sikhs. We read such assertions every day.

Does that mean that others ought not to worship or share langar there? Should we not recite in our Gurdwara the following Guru Granth Verse addressed to a Muslim?

ਉਠੁ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਉਜੁ ਸਾਜਿ ਸੁਬਹ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਿ ॥ Fareed, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 1381.

Rise up, Fareed, and cleanse yourself; chant your morning Muslim prayer.

Are we not shocked first at the arrogance of our co-religionists, and the more profoundly at the self-righteousness of our excuses?

That sin of labeling a place of worship for a Sikh only is threatening to the faith itself. Although at the level of being a Sikh, one may not think of it as unsettling, the illustration is pertinent to the present topic under discussion. Theologically, no sensitive or decent Sikh could patronize that tender but it is done routinely by those counting themselves as the Sikhs.

A Gurdwara that excludes those who are not Sikhs, by the same act excludes those who are Sikh. Noun and adjective are here torn shredding apart. Guru Nanak said on the beginning pages of the Guru Granth **ਆਈ ਪੰਥੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਮਾਤੀ** meaning the best religious path is the one that welcomes all voyagers.

Origin of Sikh Terms:

Who were those who were first to be called Sikhs and when did these terms come into literature? When did the noun terms and the adjective terms, as we used them today, come into existence? I have not searched much, and certainly someone could write a thesis research project to investigate this particular point more thoroughly. However one may cite the following.

Bhai Gurdas wrote extensively in his sixteenth century compositions on who is Sikh; let me quote only one verse as:

ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖੀ ਬਾਰੀਕ ਹੈ ਖੰਡੇ ਧਾਰ ਗਲੀ ਅਤਿ ਭੀੜੀ॥
Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 11, Pauri 5.

To be Sikh is walking on a very sharp path. It is like walking on the blade of a sharp sword and walking through a tightly narrow alley.

In modern times, the sensitivity arose only a century ago. Colonial powers wanted to count communities for electoral powers through head counts.

The Sikh matter was spearheaded by the premier Sikh organization, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). SGPC undertook to define a Sikh for the purpose of census and for the purpose of a manual being prepared for those taking initiation of *khande di pahul*. The terms as we use them today were mostly developed there.

This was no different for Sikhs. It was becoming a fashion with all Indian communities who came under pressure to define their constituents.

SGPC invited representatives of all shades and opinions for long deliberations. Like with all other religions, particularly the minority religions, Sikh clerics and politicians introduced Sikh definitions. The first draft was then debated by sub-committees and the community for next fifteen years or so. I was included in the deliberations through my colleagues in the All India Sikh Students Federation at the time when the consensus was eventually solidified into a published text. The text was certainly not without a touch of self-centeredness and some missionary zeal but, with only few exceptions, everyone was on the same page and content. There was a genuine effort to preserve both the noun “Sikh” and the adjective “Sikh”. With very few exceptions, the effort was welcome by all Sikhs of that age and time.

Two Tier Definition

SGPC succeeded in providing the best yet definition, a part of which defined “a Sikh” and remaining defined “Sikh.” A Sikh was one who committed to be a Sikh and did not claim affiliation to any other religion. In contrast, Sikh was defined in term of faith to live by such sacred beliefs that were incorporated in the Guru Granth.

Like in the times of the Gurus, the Sikh leadership and the Sikh organizations then began to court all those who defined themselves Sikh. Those were the populations who would help swell the Sikh ranks and fill the voter banks. They would donate resources for the growth of the Sikh communities. They filled the population ranks of Northern India and were spreading out around the world. Poets and writers alike were describing both East and West Punjab to be the land of the Gurus meaning the over-whelming populations followed Guru Nanak for the health of their body and soul.

But within three to four decades all began to change. India was partitioned and the Sikhs were driven out of Pakistan to settle in India and abroad. India chose to be a secular country and it abolished electoral representation based on religion. Only place where the Sikhs were to play the voting game was to manage properties and wealth associated with the Sikh gurdwaras. The politicians would now divide the Sikh communities into the voting banks for the control of Gurdwara properties. They would use the weapon of definitions to eliminate those who might differ with them. They would even ask the county's court system to disqualify segments of the Sikhs that they wanted to disfranchise.

Thus, we disremembered the two tier definition of "Sikh". We have gotten used to the term over a few decades. We are becoming accustomed to employing it so haphazardly and irreverently to suite our selfish intentions. During the process, we have lost any clear grasp of why I should be hesitant in responding to the question, "Are you a Sikh?"

Sikhee worth the Head:

Bhai Mani Singh, accepted martyrdom to help us remember our commitment. He was the high cleric of Sri Harmandar Sahib and Akal Takhat, and was martyred in protecting our sacred institutions three centuries ago.

A Sikh youth, Bhai Hakikat Rai, similarly followed Bhai Mani Singh's footsteps. And, there were many more.

In those days, history reminds us, the term Sikh designated not those who had privileged entry to exclusive organizations or clubs, or just to exclude others from sharing any power, but those whom the rulers of the land had marked out for scalping their skulls. Yet "we are not worthy of Sikhee", responded those to whom the term applied.

Every Sikh responded to the executor. I must accept the Sikh identity; not as something of which I am worthy, but as something to which I aspire in the presence of my Guru. You put me to death because I say I am Sikh. I hope that you find me worthy - not that much in name, but in my capacity to stand by my beliefs.

Bhai Mani Singh and thousands of others who gave their life for their belief were actually following the footsteps of their mentors like Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur. They who endured extreme sufferings to protect their belief in universal religious freedom and human rights.

The Sikh scripture supports this allegiance as:

ਜਉ ਤਨੁ ਚੀਰਹਿ ਅੰਗੁ ਨ ਮੋਰਉ ॥ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਪਰੈ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਨ ਤੋਰਉ -
Kabir, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 484.

Even if you cut my body apart, I shall not pull my limbs away. Even if my body falls, I shall not break my bonds of love with YOU.

If today we recaptured the martyr's belief it would add quite a new quality to our thinking of our belief and brags, and perhaps to our mode of living. It may reshape a little more than the otherwise undeserved application to us of the term "Sikh," which to the martyrs and protectors of human rights evidently meant much more.

Evolution of the Term:

I attempted to investigate certain facets of the evolving history to understand the use of the adjective "Sikh"; and have discovered some quite startling examples. To cite one is an instance from the life of Guru Arjun.

The fifth Guru once wished to award a coin to a performing bard in his congregation on behalf of each Sikh. He offered four and half coins and announced that the half coin was on his own behalf. He further elaborated that he was counting each of his predecessor Guru as full Sikh and himself an *half Sikh* because he had not reached the level of spiritual evolution and practices required of full Sikhs.

To help you appreciate the event described let me remind you that Guru Arjun compiled most of the scripture that we esteem today as our eternal SABD (Word) Guru. Thus, he set in stone the theology that we live by. His labeling of himself as *half Sikh*, although an instance of extreme humility was nevertheless an example of a deep meaning and future guidance. He was constructing a scale with which to measure one's Sikhee.

Scriptural Support:

We can also go to our scripture to seek guidance in

this matter. Guru Gobind Singh asked us in no uncertain terms in his last sermon on October 20, 1708, that we ought to surrender to Sri Guru Granth Sahib for an answer when in doubt.

But I am petrified regarding what my eternal mentor might tell me on being Sikh if I asked the scripture to give a definition of Sikh. As a way around my timidity, let me ask instead what my Guru would say in another but a similar situation.

There were many Muslims who regularly came to the Guru's presence to seek guidance. If any one of them wanted to claim himself as Muslim, the Guru would humble him or her by saying the following (see page 141 in Sri Guru Granth Sahib).

ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵਣੁ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ ਜਾ ਹੋਇ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥
ਅਵਲਿ ਅਉਲਿ ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਠਾ ਮਸਕਲ ਮਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੁ ਮੁਸਾਵੈ ॥
ਹੋਇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮੁ ਦੀਨ ਮੁਹਾਣੈ ਮਰਣ ਜੀਵਣ ਕਾ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ ॥
ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮੰਨੇ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਮੰਨੇ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਵੈ ॥
ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰੰਮਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥

It is tough to be called Muslim; if one is truly Muslim, then he/she may be called one. First, let one savor the religion of the Prophet as sweet; then, let his pride of his possessions be scraped away. Becoming a true Muslim, a disciple of the faith of Mohammed, let him put aside the delusion of death and life. As he submits to God's Will, and surrenders to the Creator, he is rid of selfishness and conceit. And when, says Nanak, he is merciful to all beings, only then shall he be called a Muslim.

Our founder, Guru Nanak went into a great deal of theology to counsel his Muslim followers.

ਮਿਹਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਕੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥
ਸਰਮ ਸੁੰਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ॥
ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਬਾ ਸਚੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਕਲਮਾ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥
ਤਸਬੀ ਸਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਬੈ ਲਾਜ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਮਃ ੧ ॥

ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੂਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ॥
ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਾਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ ॥
ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥
ਮਾਰਣ ਪਾਹਿ ਹਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਗਲੀ ਕੂੜੀਈ ਕੂੜੇ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥ ੨ ॥ ਮਃ ੧ ॥
ਪੰਜਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਵਖਤ ਪੰਜਿ ਪੰਜਾ ਪੰਜੇ ਨਾਉ ॥
ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਹਲਾਲ ਦੁਇ ਤੀਜਾ ਬੈਰ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥

ਚਉਥੀ ਨੀਅਤਿ ਰਾਸਿ ਮਨੁ ਪੰਜਵੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਨਾਇ ॥
ਕਰਣੀ ਕਲਮਾ ਆਖਿ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਸਦਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇਤੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ਕੂੜੇ ਕੂੜੀ ਪਾਇ ॥

Let mercy be your mosque, faith your prayer-mat and honest living your holy book. Make modesty your circumcision, and good conduct your fasting. In this way, you shall be a True Muslim. Let good conduct be your holy place, Kaabaa, Truth your spiritual guide, and good deeds your kalma prayer and chant. Let that be your rosary, which is pleasing to God's Will. O Nanak, then God shall preserve your honor. To take away what rightfully belongs to another is like a Muslim eating the forbidden pork, or a Hindu eating forbidden beef. Our Guru, our Spiritual Guide, stands by us only if we do not commit bad deeds (eat those carcasses). By mere talking, people do not earn passage to the Heaven. Salvation comes only from the practice of Truth. By adding spices to forbidden foods, they are not made the sanctioned ones. Says Nanak, from false speech, only falsehood is obtained. There are five prayers and five prayer times of day; they have five names. Let the first be truthfulness, the second honest living and the third charity in the Name of God. Let the fourth be good will to all, and the fifth the praise of God. Repeat the prayer of good deeds, and then, you may call yourself a Muslim. Says Nanak, the false ones obtain falsehood and only falsehood.

The example of Muslims in this paper brings to our attention certain parallels to our situation from another community. There are similarities that originate cross-culturally. They both elaborate and enrich our understanding of who is Sikh. Let me explain.

An ambiguity detected in the Islamic tradition is similar to ours. There, as with us, the word "Muslim" is used both as a noun and as an adjective: the noun formal, mundane, designating membership in an historical community as a superficial fact, while the adjective refers to content designating an internal attitude and orientation.

Ask a member of the Islamic community if one is "a Muslim," and the answer is "yes" forthrightly, sensing no problem and registering no prior or subsequent thought.

Ask him, however, if he is Muslim, and he shows great sensitivity and responsibility if he can answer convincingly and without a reverent consternation.

"Muslim" in Arabic means "submitter" or "self-committing," so that to affirm that a person is "Muslim" is to speak of one's quality of heart, one's commitment to God, and one's readiness to obey whatever injunctions the sacred book may make incumbent on that person.

Two persons may both be Muslims, but one of them may be more Muslim than the other; the same person may be more Muslim in one situation than in another, more Muslim one morning than in the same afternoon.

Universality in Sikh Conducts:

Further perusal of the Guru guided foundations of Sikh traditions we are startled with the universality of Sikh religion and thereby its followers who may define themselves as Sikhs.

To take the Sikh scriptural figure of Sheikh Farid, might one say that he was not a Sikh as he was a Muslim. True, but he was Sikh on account of his beliefs, teachings and high living. His verses were included in our sacred scripture even though he claimed himself to be a Muslim. He freely used Muslim idioms and metaphors in his verses.

Same can be said of Bhagat Kabir and other non-Guru Authors of the Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth. All of them are fully accepted as channels of revelation that formed the Sikh scripture.

In the Sikh history, Bhai Mian Mir can be taken as another figure that may be controversial for our discussion. Guru Arjun recognized him out of all his contemporaries, Sikhs and others, to lay the foundation stone of Darbar Sahib, Golden Temple that the Guru was constructing to house the Sacred Sikh Scripture.

Since that time, Sikhs treated Mian with their highest regard in spite that he was a Muslim. In quality he was Sikh to be given this unique honor. Until only a few years ago, Sikhs followed the guidance of their Guru and appointed Muslim musicians for singing Guru's hymns in the innermost sanctuary of the Golden Temple.

I realize that considerations such as these will arouse cross-cultural implications that may even complicate the issue. However, their discussion is necessary as it enriches our traditions.

Only a Sikh:

Personally, I am not a Muslim, nor a Jew nor Hindu, nor a Christian, but I am a Sikh. Again, my answer to a question on this point can be quick, clear, and definite. Yet, if the question is raised, am I Sikh, Muslim or Hindu, the answer is not quick and clear, nor definite.

I do not speak Arabic or Sanskrit, nor do I observe Hindu or Muslim rituals normally. Instead I was named in the historic Gurdwara Panja Sahib and married according to the Sikh tradition of Anand Karaj. Here the adjective is in the form of a question; does it apply to me, or can I apply it to myself.

The only possible answer that I can give to this question is that I hope to be Muslim in the sense described above in my Guru's hymns as much as I long to be Sikh as my Guru ordained in the same scripture. Any other answer would be blasphemous and arrogant.

I can also be a Muslim in the sense that the Guru practiced Islam on occasions himself. Guru Nanak even wore Muslim clothing and carried the Qur'an to Makkah with the intension of participating in the Hajj. He spent around two years in Makkah, Medina, and Baghdad among Muslim Mullah and Ullmans. I should be obedient to God's Will and be charitable to God's creation; as readily as God gives me courage and ability.

I am not, alas, in the practice of my life, as Muslim as a good Sikh could be. But certainly I could aspire to be.

One cannot be both a Sikh and a Muslim or a Hindu or a Christian at the same time. Nouns are there to keep us separately identifiable. On the other hand, it is not, I suggest, as ridiculous or fanciful as it might sound, to ask whether in the realm of adjectives it might not be possible for a person to be both Sikh and Muslim some times. I for one can understand and consent to the meanings for the terms in which this is possible. I could even say that to be truly Sikh is ipso facto to be truly Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Jew, or Christian some times.

Those of you whose hearts God has opened to surrender and who are fortunate to be blessed by the Guru's commandments would not think in terms of

such particularities of adjectives to characterize the quality of their orientation. Whether you know it or not, these adjectives are there in Sikhee to actually describe the mind-set to which one hopes to rise in one's best moments.

Conclusion:

It is a highly rewarding exercise to inquire more discerningly what our founders and the enlightened souls have meant when they understood "Sikh" as a noun or an adjective, or even a verb. It is equally rewarding to ask oneself what one means, or proposes to mean, by this term of our faith, not merely when one is about to use it in a speech or in writing, but also when one is in one's trying moments.

In conclusion, let us make life simpler and enjoyable by claiming only one faith, the noun Sikh and the adjective Sikh. Then in the silence of our room, in the hub-bubs of the daily scuffle, in the busy current of our routines, or in our crises and predicaments, look for opportunities to value our faith in reflecting on what "Sikh" might mean right then and there.

Each morning as you arise; you might well ask yourself what you intend to make the word Sikh mean for yourself this day.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From: Ajit Singh [<mailto:ajit@ajitsingh.ca>] **Sent:**
Monday, April 29, 2013 12:49 PM
To: Hardev Singh Shergill
Cc: Gurmit Singh; khairag@aol.com
Subject: Re: Sikh Bulletin March-April 2013

Sardar Hardev Singh Ji,
Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

Sikh Bulletin was a good publication with good Panthic intentions. I followed it up from the very beginning to this last day of publication (as I have kept all the hard and electronic copies of the bulletin in Sikh National Archives of Canada) In my opinion you have done a good overall job trying to efface the "Bharam Bhulekhaie", that has crept in a Pure Nirmal Panth of Gurubani. From day one various forces (individuals and organizational) tried to Create misconceptions through telling lies, but majority of the Sikhs remained clear and steadfast on Gurbani Vichar and tried to mold their lives as per the teachings. Lately, since 1984 there had been a rapid decline in the character of many who claimed themselves as Sikhs but conducting themselves in Un-Sikh manners at the same time. It was all the efforts of the Rulers in India and Punjab who joined hands with Fake Sant Babas to the detriment of the common folks going astray.

Twelve years may be a long time for a person to face the odds to publish the bimonthly, and you deserve the credit. Although I was never in agreement with all the matters put in black and white in this bulletin, but still certain matters were quite regrettable to read in your bulletin. Just to mention most obvious one was the slander of Sardar Jaswant Singh Bhullar in one of your editorials and the writings of Prof Gurtej Singh, who maligned general Bhullar due to personal hate based on professor's revengeful attitude. This was a great disservice to the Truth. I better not say much more beyond this, but this was not a good thing for someone who wants to be proud Sikh.

Although, regrettably the bulletin has ceased its publication but I am sure those attached with the publication will keep on writing in times to come.

Ajit Singh Sahota. Canada.

[Ajit Singh Ji, thank you for taking the time to write the following words. I appreciate it highly. I know the issue of General Bhullar is very dear to you and I am sorry for having hurt your feelings. I also feel that your belief in General Bhullar's integrity is very sincere. You would agree, though, that two people from two different perspectives and different information can have opposing opinions.

The Sikh Bulletin is not shutting down; it is just changing perspective under the very able guidance of S. Gurpal Singh Khaira, whom you know. In its effort to bring about reformation in Sikhi, The Sikh Bulletin had to take on controversial issues, including the collusion of Sikh leaders with the authorities in New Delhi and RSS influence over our Sikh Sansthas through their leadership.

The new version of The Sikh Bulletin will deal only with the Mission of

Guru Nanak and get it to as many non-Sikhs as possible. Sikhs will not be our primary target but it will be there for those who seek to learn. Best Regards, Hardev Singh Shergill]

*

Tue 4/30/2013 5:02 PM

Hello Hardev Singh Ji

So shocked to hear about the 'last issue' of Sikh Bulletin.

You and your colleagues have done a tremendous service to Sikhism. Yes, Sikhi may not get reformed as you have explained very well about the efforts of Guru Nanak himself. I firmly believe that Guru Nanak and Guru Granth are not for starting a new religion. Sikhism is a way of life.

Religion and God are mutually exclusive. As Guru Granth teaches us, religions are merely humanly and earthly things to practice, religions define inclusions, exclusions, boundaries and preferences for certain ways and rituals. Religions center on money and power.

God has created humans as master piece of His creation and gave us conscious to judge good and bad and contemplate God. God has created only one religion, "Humanity".

God is very personal and individual thing. We each have to connect with HIS light and be one with Him in our own way.

I, for one, would say that please be proud of your work and service. It has reformed many Sikhs and individuals. You and your team has done great work to shine light on Guru Granth's teachings, you cannot force people to look. Let that be God's own will.

With best regards and wishes to everyone connected to Sikh Bulletin.

Satpal S Sidhu
Fulbright Scholar

*

Mon 5/6/2013 3:31 PM

Waheguru ji ka khalsa,
Waheguru ji ki fateh.

Veerji,

I am thankful to you for sending me the Sikh Bulletin , I read the editorial and came to know, how difficult it has been for you to show the face of truth. I also realize and understand that it is like taking the road , that is not taken by many. Your efforts and hard work and passion has not gone unnoticed or unfruitful , actually I feel that we as a panth are far more awakened now. S. Kala afgana ji did a great service to get our psyche cleansed of Biparan ki reet. I thank you again for sending his volumes and I ordered many sets back in 2003/4.I read all those books many times, I did my Misssionary Diploma of 2 yrs. in 1997-98. We know, people who can relate to the genius of the writers of truth are few, we know there were few who could understand the Guru's Spiritual Genius then, when HE was among us in physical form, and even now there are few who understand the totality of Shabad Guru's love and its freedom, its joy,its bliss,its grandeur, so as to say its full glory. May your joy and hopefulness be blessed.Remember you are doing your part ,rest it is to the Guru to take it to new heights. Will you be publishing the Bulletin or no? Sikhi is complete and potent as you know, we have to prepare a heart where it blooms. No reform in my opinion but a fast revival of the beautiful tenets of Sikhi given to us in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. When our hearts start glowing with the love of Guru and our Heads are held high with the Pride if Sikhi , the army of infidels and cowards and tyrants will fade away. Guru said, Sawa lakh se ek ladaun, giddonn se main sher banaun, tabbae Gobind Singh naam kahaun. We live for Him as His Khalsa, and we will be winners one day!!!

If I wrote anything,that is hurtful or inappropriate, please excuse me,
Jasbir Kaur

WARRIOR SAINTS A BOOK REVIEW

Empowered by Guru Nanak's message of acceptance and compassion, and inspired by his unceasing defense of these ideals, the Sikhs embarked on an uncharted journey of struggle and resilience. **They emerged as guardians of an independent, thriving society and defenders of India's bloodiest gateway,** only to fall under the looming shadow of the Victorian Conqueror.

Explore the extraordinary people, events and ideas that influenced the genesis of a unique martial culture through 90 rare historical images brought to life with stirring accounts from friends and foes alike.

Against all odds

Inspired by their sixth Guru, Har Gobind, and his grandson and tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, the Sikhs took up arms to withstand decades of sustained persecution, initially by the Mughal Empire but later by Persian and Afghan invaders.

Under the leadership of the Guru's elite warriors, the Akali-Nihangs, the Sikhs ultimately prevailed to establish their rule over Punjab in the 1760s. They went on to secure the borders with Afghanistan, sealing for the first time in a millennia the invader's gateway into the subcontinent.

Rulers now of a mighty empire stretching from Kashmir and the Afghan and Tibet borders to southern Punjab, the Sikh army became one of the most powerful Asia had ever seen. Their growing ambition to extend their influence was only thwarted with a rival foreign power, the British East India Company.

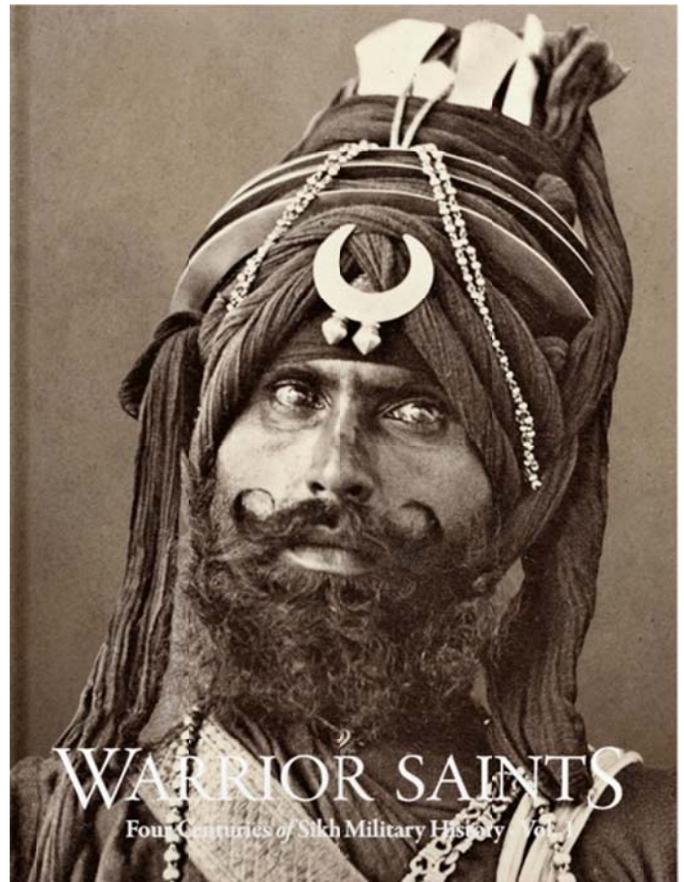
These military superpowers clashed in two bloody campaigns spanning 1845-1849. After six major battles and several documented instances of treachery in the Sikh command, the British claimed victory, signaling the sunset of Sikh rule and the dawn of a new British Raj in Punjab and beyond.

Illuminating a lost inheritance

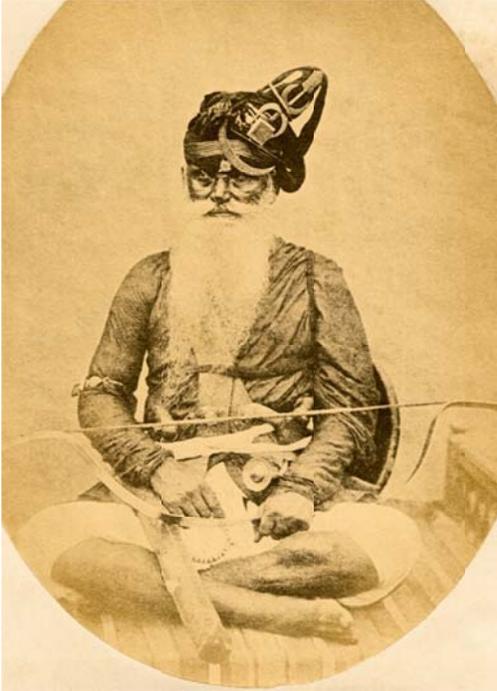
According to co-author Parmjit Singh, *Warrior Saints* (Vol. 1) vividly tells this epic tale of the rise of a people, infused with a righteous message and fearless determination, in a way never captured before: *'The reputation of the Sikhs as a warrior people is well known throughout the world. However, how they gained that reputation has never been fully told or appreciated. Indeed, the details have always been sketchy, even to Sikhs themselves. For the past two decades we have been on a journey of discovery to reveal this hidden history with a view to sharing it in a comprehensive but easily digestible way. It is a tale of enormous fortitude and resolve that rivals any military history through the ages. The remarkable thing is that*

the ramifications of this unique story still resonate today.'

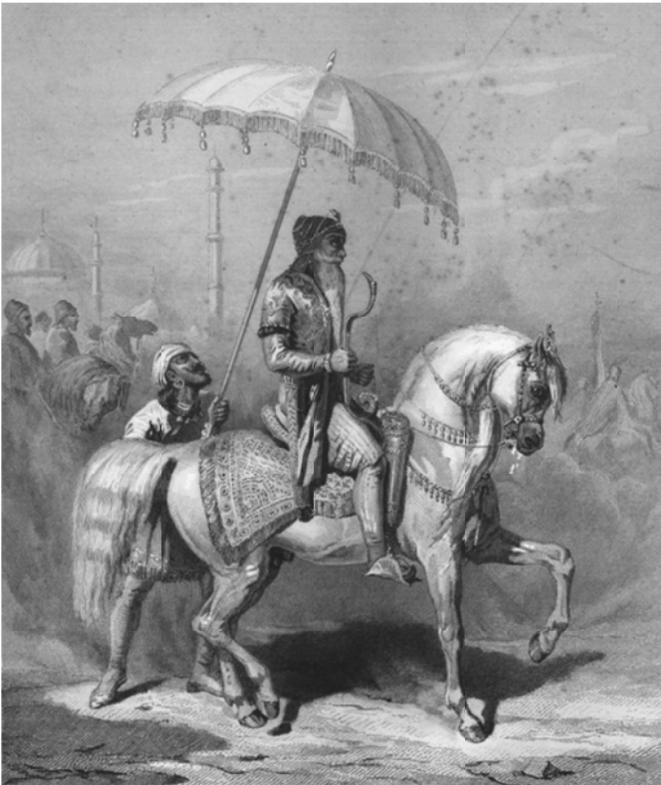
Co-author Amandeep Madra continued: *'People think of the Sikh warrior tradition as coming into being with the founding of the Khalsa in 1699 by the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. In fact, its roots lie in the teachings of Guru Nanak in the 1500s and in the struggles of the Sikhs for survival from the early 1600s. Our revised edition of *Warrior Saints* aims to bring to light this more nuanced narrative in which the Sikh martial tradition and its philosophical underpinnings are more tightly bound. We also trace the phenomenal rise of a new force in the subcontinent that took on persecutors and foreign rule. **It was truly an army of the people for the people.**'*



Front Cover; Nihang bodyguard serving in the Nizam of Hyderabad's irregular Sikh army, albumen print, Captain W. W. Hooper & Surgeon, c. 1865. Toor collection.



Veteran Akali-Nihang armed with bow and arrows
Albumen print, Lahore, c. 1862



The Lion of Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, riding a stallion
Engraving, Eléonore Sophie Rebel after an oil painting by Alfred de Dreux
Paris, 1838. Toor Collection

The story will continue in Volume Two (forthcoming) with its compelling account of how, after Punjab was annexed by the British, the conquered Sikhs went on to serve the British Empire, laying down their lives in their thousands in the World Wars and playing a pivotal role in the military exploits of independent India.



Maharajah Sher Singh and his entourage out hunting.
Lithograph, L. H. de Rudder after a drawing by Prince Alexis Saltauikov
Amritsar, April 1842. Private Collection

A lot of effort, dedication and perseverance went into bringing to fruition this monumental task. First released in 1999, the authors have since added the results of fourteen more years of research into the story of the rise of a revolutionary people's army. The result is an entirely new book, spread over two magnificent volumes created with the single aim of making this rich material accessible to today's audience. The new edition has been redesigned and substantially revised and contains even more hidden histories and captivating unseen imagery from times past.

About the Book

Title: *Warrior Saints: Four Centuries of Sikh Military History (Vol. 1)*

Dimensions: 8.5" x 11.25". Metric: 210mm x 280mm

Pages: approx. 240

Illustrations: 90 colour and b&w

Format: hardback

ISBN: 978-0-9560168-5-0

Authors: Amandeep Singh Madra & Parmjit Singh

Design: Juga Singh

About the Authors

Amandeep Singh Madra is the chair of the UK Punjab Heritage Association (www.ukpha.org) and his co-author, Parmjit Singh, is a founding director of Kashi House.

They have collaborated on several books on Sikh history including:

Warrior Saints: Three Centuries of Sikh Military Tradition (IB Tauris, 1999)

- “*Sicques, Tigers, or Thieves*”: *Eyewitness Accounts of the Sikhs (1606-1809)* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)
- *The Golden Temple of Amritsar: Reflections of the Past (1808-1959)* (Kashi House, 2011)

They have lectured across the world and contributed to several television documentaries and radio programmes on the subject.

About the Publisher

Kashi House is a registered not-for-profit social enterprise dedicated to preserving the cultural heritage of the Sikhs and Punjab. Its aim is to bring about a renaissance in the understanding of the history, traditions and teachings of the Sikhs. Its name and mission have been drawn from the example of the literature-loving warrior poet and Tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh.

As part of his scholarly mission, he founded in 1706 a center of learning in Punjab to instill in his followers a thirst for knowledge. He named it 'Guru ki Kashi' (the Guru's Kashi), drawing inspiration from the Indian city of Varanasi (Benares), which in classical literature and scripture is referred to poetically as Kashi—the 'luminous'—an allusion to the city's historical status as an ancient and renowned center of learning, literature and culture. Kashi House was established exactly three centuries after the founding of the Guru's Kashi.

The Kashi House team is made up of authors, researchers and designers, all British-born Sikhs who are passionate about their cultural heritage and dedicated to sharing their knowledge and insights. The team's effectiveness stems from a combination of decades of painstaking research, fabulous

creative design and wide-ranging professional experience. For their full range of titles and art prints see www.kashihouse.com.

Sales & Distribution

Retail Price: Rs 3,500

India distributor

Singh Brothers, S.C.O. 223-24, Amritsar - 143 001, Punjab

Contact: Gursagar Singh (phone: 0183-2550739)

Booksellers

The book will be available from all good booksellers in Amritsar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Mumbai and Calcutta including Capital Book Depot, SCO 2, First Floor, Sector 17-E, Chandigarh (phone: 0172-2702260).

The 1999 edition is also available at Amazon Books, \$600.00 new and \$199.39 used.

Contact if you require:

- more information,
- a review copy,
- author interviews, or
- further images,

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ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ

ਸੁਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੰਵਰ

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਹਰ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਂ ਇੰਜ ਕਹਿ ਲਵੇ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਏ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਕੋਈ ਕਿਸ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਏ (Angle) ਤੋਂ ਵੇਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਅਰਥ ਬਦਲ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਮੇਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਕੁਝ ਚੀਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਯੁਗ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਹਰ

ਗਲ ਤਰਕ (Reason) ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਪੂਰੀ ਤੇ ਠੀਕ ਉਤਰਨੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਵੇਖਣ ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੋ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਵਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਤ ਧਾਰਨਾਵਾਂ ਸਨ ਕਈ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਧਾਰਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਿਕ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਠੀਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਤਰਦੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਧਾਰਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰੇ ਤੇ ਹੀ ਨਿਕਾਰਿਆ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਵਹਿਮਾਂ, ਭਰਮਾਂ, ਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਾਂਡਾਂ ਤੇ ਬਾਹਰ ਕਛਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੀ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿਤਾ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਤਾਂ ਇਕ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਾਵ ਵਾਲਾ ਸੁਖਾਵਾਂ, ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ, ਅਨੰਦ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਨਾ ਕਰਨਾਂ ਸੀ ਜਿਥੇ ਹਰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਜਾਤ ਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਮੁਲਕ ਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਾਵ ਹੋਵੇ ਤੇ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਦੂਸਰਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦਯਾ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਣਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਬਰ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਂਤ ਸੁਭਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਸਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਇਸ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਖ ਰਖ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ। ਦੂਸਰੇ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਲੋਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਰੀਜ਼ਣ (Logic and Reason) ਦੇ ਅਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਭਾਵ ਤਰਕ ਦੇ ਅਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਪੂਰੀ ਉਤਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਦੋ ਤੇ ਦੋ ਚਾਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਹਰ ਪਖ ਤੋਂ ਠੀਕ ਉਤਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਸ ਗਲ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਰਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਕਿ ਕਿਤੇ ਇਹ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਕਿ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਵਹਿਮਾਂ, ਭਰਮਾਂ, ਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਾਂਡਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਕਰਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਵੇ।

ਇਥੇ ਇਹ ਗਲ ਵੀ ਸਮਝ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਜੋ ਸ਼ਬਦ (ਲਫਜ਼) ਵਰਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਪਰਚਲਤ ਜਾਂ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਤੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਹੀ ਵਰਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਵਖਰੇ ਢੰਗ ਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਰੋਢਾਵਾਦ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਕਿ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਕਿਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਗਲ ਵੇਖਣ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਨੇ ਜੇ ਮਿਥਿਆਸਕ ਗਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਾਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਇਸ ਬਹਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਏ ਕਿ ਮਿਥਿਆਸਕ ਵਾਰਦਾਤਾਂ ਠੀਕ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਗਲਤ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਾਰਦਾਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਸੇਦ ਲੈਣ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਇਹ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਬਦ 'ਨਾਮ' ਜੋ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਾਰੀ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ 'ਨਾਮ' ਦੇ ਭਾਵ ਅਰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਲੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਇਹ ਹੀ ਦਸੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਪਾਠ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰ ਲੈਣੀ ਹੀ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਣਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਕੁਝ ਸੂਝਵਾਣ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਭਾਵ ਅਰਥ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਨ:

1. Law of Nature ਭਾਵ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ, ਹੁਕਮ ਭਾਵ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ, ਆਦਿ,
2. ਰੱਬੀ ਗਿਆਨ, ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਦੀ ਮਤ, ਚੰਗੀ ਮਤ, (Wisdom) ਵਿਵੇਕ ਬੁਧੀ ਆਦਿ
3. ਰਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਰ, ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਆਦਿ
4. ਸੁਖ, ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ, ਸਬਰ, ਸਨਤੋਖ ਆਦਿ

ਜਦੋਂ ਵੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ 'ਨਾਮ' ਸ਼ਬਦ ਆਵੇ ਉਸ ਵਕਤ 'ਨਾਮ' ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਉਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਬਨਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ 'ਨਾਮ' ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਸਮਝਣੇ ਹੋਣ ਗੇ। 'ਜਪੁ' ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਮੰਗਲਾ ਚਰਨ ਵਿਚ 'ਨਾਮ' ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ੴ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਹੋਏ- ਇਕ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਹੈ - ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ, ਜਾਂ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ, ਤੇ ਹੁਣ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਜਾਂ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਜਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਅੱਜ ਕਲ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਕਹਿ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਰਗੁਣ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਭਾਵ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ, ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਅਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਰੰਗ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਵਾਕ ਹੈ। ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖ ਨ ਰੰਗੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਿੰਨ॥ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਜਾਂ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਦੋ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਸਰਬ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹਨ। ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ (Omni Present) ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਚ ਹੈ ਭਾਵ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਇਕ ਅਟਲ ਸਚਾਈ ਹੈ। ਓਂਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਅੰਤ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਹੋਏ - (Law of Nature) ਭਾਵ

ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ, ਹੁਕਮ, ਜਾਂ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ, ਸਤਿ ਹੈ, ਭਾਵ ਅਟਲ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਬਦਲਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ, ਇਹ ਸਰਬਵਿਆਪਕ (Omni present) ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਸਤਿ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਭਾਵ ਅਟਲ (Omni Potent) ਵੀ ਹੈ।

ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ- ਇਹ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਇਕ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਹਸਤੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਪਜਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਪੁਰਖ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵ ਆਪ ਪੈਦਾਇਸ਼ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਉਪਜਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਨਾਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਉਤਪਤੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ, ਇਸ ਦੇ ਸੁਭਾ, ਜਾ ਗੁਣ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਵੀ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੋਨ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਚੰਗੇ ਸੁਭਾ ਦਾ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ ਕੋਣ ਭੈੜੇ ਸੁਭਾ ਦਾ, ਇਸ ਉਤੇ ਵੀ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਹੀ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਨੀਯਮ ਦਾ ਖੁਲਾਸਾ ਜਪੁ ਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਦੂਸਰੀ ਪੇੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਬੜੇ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੈ:

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ॥

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਜੀਅ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਡਿਆਈ॥

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਉਤਮੁ ਨੀਚੁ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਦੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਈਅਹਿ॥

ਇਕਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ ਇਕਿ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਦਾ ਭਵਾਈਅਹਿ॥

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਜੇ ਬੁਝੈ ਤ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥੨॥

ਨਿਰਭਉ: ਜਦੋਂ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਂ ਇੰਝ ਕਹਿ ਲਵੇ ਕਿ ਰਬ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਰਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਗੁਣ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਥੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਅਰਥ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਿਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ: ਇਕ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜਾਂ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਡਰਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਥੇ ਡਰ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਇਹ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਇਹ ਕਹੇ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਫਲਾਣੀ ਮੁਰਾਦ ਪੂਰੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਈ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਛੱਡ ਦਿਆਂ ਗਾ, ਜਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਜਾਨ ਦੇ ਦਿਆਂ ਗਾ ਆਦਿ ਤੇ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਡਰ ਜਾਨ ਗੇ ਭਾਵ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦਾ ਨੀਯਮ ਬਦਲ ਜਾਵੇ ਗਾ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਮੁਰਾਦ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ ਗੀ। ਇਹ ਗਲਤ ਸੋਚਣੀ ਹੈ, ਇਕ ਭੇਲੇਖਾ ਹੈ, ਪਖੰਡ ਹੈ। ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਮਕੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਡਰ

ਕੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਮੁਰਾਦ ਪੂਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਦਲਦੇ। ਦੂਜੇ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਡਰਾਂਦੇ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਗੁਰੂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੇ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਹੈ। ਜਪੁ ਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਤੁਕ ਹੈ: ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚੁ ਨਾਇ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਭਾਉ ਅਪਾਰੁ॥ ਭਾਵਿ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਰਬਜੀ ਸਭ ਨਾਲ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਿਆਰ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਚੰਗੀ ਲਗਦੀ ਹੈ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਥਾਂ ਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਿਆਰ, ਮਿਠਬੋਲੜਾ, ਮਹਿਰਵਾਨ ਤੇ ਰਖਣਹਾਰ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ ਦਸੇ ਹਨ।

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ: ਭਾਵ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ, ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਵੈਰ ਜਾਂ ਦਵੈਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਖਦੇ ਉਹ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਭਾਵ ਕਿ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦਾ ਨੀਯਮ ਸਭ ਲਈ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਵਰਤੀਦੇ ਹਨ। ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਭਾਵ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਕਿਸੇ ਲਾਲਚ ਵਸ ਜਾਂ ਚਾਪਲੂਸੀ ਨਾਲ ਪਤੀਜ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਭਾਵ ਬਦਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਂਦੇ। ਕੁਦਰਤ ਆਪਣੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਕਹੇ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੋਲਤ ਦੇਵਾਂ ਗਾ ਜੇ ਕਰ ਪਾਣੀ ਗਰੀਬ ਦੀ ਪਿਆਸ ਨਾ ਮਟਾਵੇ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦਾ ਨੀਯਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਦਲੇ ਗਾ, ਪਾਣੀ ਤਾਂ ਸਭ ਦੀ ਪਿਆਸ ਬੁਝਾਵੇ ਗਾ ਹੀ ਭਾਂਵੇ ਕੋਈ ਗਰੀਬ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਅਮੀਰ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਸਮਝ ਲੈਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਪੰਡਤ, ਭਾਈ, ਮੁਲਾਂ, ਜਾਂ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਬਣੇ ਸੰਤ, ਮਹਾਤਮਾਂ, ਬਾਬੇ ਤੇ ਡੇਰੇ ਦਾਰ ਇਹ ਦਾਵਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕੋਈ ਖਾਸ ਮੰਤਰ ਪੜ ਕੇ ਜਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਖਾਸ ਪਾਠ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਧਰਮ ਅਸਥਾਣ ਦੇ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨ ਕਰਕੇ, ਜਾਂ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਨੂੰ ਬਦਲ ਦਿਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਗਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਮੁਰਖਤਾ ਵਾਲੀ ਗਲ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇ ਗੀ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ: ਕੁਦਰਤ ਜੋ ਇਕ ਹਸਤੀ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਉਤੇ ਮੋਤ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਅਸਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਅਟਲ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਨਾ ਮਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਨਾ ਬੁਢੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਦਲਾਵ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਂਦਾ। ਇਥੇ ਇਹ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕਰ ਦੇਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਕੋਈ ਬਦਲਾਵ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਬਦਲਾਵ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਦਲਾਵ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦਾ ਨੀਯਮ ਹੀ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ: ਇਹ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਭਾਵ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਜੋਨੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਏ। ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨੀਯਮ ਬਨਾਏ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ

ਹੀ ਬਣੇ ਹਨ।

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ: ਇਹ ਵੀ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਗੁਣ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਭ ਉਤੇ ਦਯਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਰਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਬਸ਼ਰਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਇਸ ਦਯਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਲਈ ਉਦਮ ਕਰੇ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਨੀਯਮ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਸਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਮੈ ਦਸਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਅਗੇ ਦਸ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਭਾਵ ਰਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਦਸ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ।

ਜਪੁ: ਜਪੁ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਵੀ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕੁਦਰਤ (ਰਬ ਜੀ) ਨੂੰ ਭਾਵ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝੋ ਤੇ ਯਾਦ ਰਖੋ। ਇਹ ਹੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਮੰਗਲਾ ਚਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਰ ਬਾਰ ਦੋਰਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

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[Belief system which equates God with the laws of Nature or Laws of Universe is absolutely contrary to what Guru Nanak Ji says in SGGS. Here is one verse from Asa Di Vaar page463 of SGGS.

Appay nēe aap Sajio appay nēe Racheo nao
Duee kudrat Sajiay Kar Asan ditho chao.

Means, the Reality created HIMSELF and next he created the nature (kudrat). Yes, the kudrat represents HIM but it is not HIM. HE is also beyond kudrat. Human faculties are not capable to comprehend this yet. We just have to accept it because Guru Ji says so. ED.]

PRESS RELEASE

The board of directors of the Khalsa Tercentennial Foundation of NA Inc., parent organization of The Sikh Bulletin is pleased to announce the appointment of S. Gural Singh Khaira to the position of Editor In Chief of the Sikh Bulletin.

Since its commencement thirteen years ago The Sikh Bulletin has been a forceful voice of the concerned Sikhs worldwide. It did not ever hesitate to discuss and comment on the most controversial issues and rose to the occasion with a crusade like zeal in defense of Sikhi and Sikh

community against hostile forces from within as well as outside. It started its publication as a printed monthly in November 1999 reaching free distribution to 22 countries by 2006. Since November-December 2006 it has been a bi-monthly online publication, published from El Dorado Hills, Sacramento Capital Region, California with circulation reaching readers in 41 countries of the world.



The Sikh Bulletin in its new vision under the leadership of S. Gural Singh Khaira as Editor in Chief will carry the message of Guru Nanak Ji to non-Sikhs and to those Sikhs who choose to listen to unadulterated version of Gurbani, unencumbered by rituals and miracles currently being practiced in all our Gurdwaras including the most revered ones.

Gural Singh Khaira left India at a very young age and was educated in England and Canada. After a very successful and rewarding career at upper management level in the Canadian Government and in the private sector which took him all over the world, he retired to Sacramento area to be closer to his doctor sons and grandchildren. He is a Punjabi Language poet and fiction writer and loves Sikh classical kirtan music.

He has been very active most of his life organizing Sikh conferences to teach and propagate Guru Nanak's message as enshrined in Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. He has been a frequent speaker at Sikh forums and conferences. His articles have been published in Sikh Review, Sikh Bulletin and other local publications.

In a statement S. Gural Singh Khaira Said he is humbled by this appointment and feels it a great challenge and opportunity to spread and propagate the true message of the Gurbani. He will welcome all suggestions from the readers and contribution of articles on Gurmat from Sikh scholars for publication in the Sikh Bulletin.

Hardev Singh Shergill, Chairman
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The Sikh Bulletin, El Dorado Hills, CA.
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GURSIKH DI ARDAAS

ਤੂ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ^੧ ਤੁਮ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ^੨ ॥
 ਜੀਉ^੩ ਪਿੰਡੁ^੪ ਸਭੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਰਾਸਿ^੫ ॥
 ਤੁਮ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੇਰੇ ॥
 ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਮਹਿ ਸੁਖ^੬ ਘਨੇਰੇ ॥
 ਕੋਇ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ॥

ਉਚੇ ਤੇ ਉਚਾ ਭਗਵੰਤ^੭ ॥
 ਸਗਲ^੮ ਸਮਗ੍ਰੀ^੯ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਸੁਤ੍ਰਿ^{੧੦} ਧਾਰੀ^{੧੧} ॥
 ਤੁਮ ਤੇ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਆਗਿਆਕਾਰੀ^{੧੨} ॥
 ਤੁਮਰੀ ਗਤਿ^{੧੩} ਮਿਤਿ^{੧੪} ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਜਾਨੀ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸ ਸਦਾ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ^{੧੫} ॥੮॥੯॥
 ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: ੫, ਪੰਨਾ ੨੬੮ (Sukhmani Sahib)

The above verse is a perfect ARDAAS. I have divided it into two parts for its interpretation.

First part deals with the *Ardaas* (prayer) or Thanksgiving.

Since it is also important to understand the God to Whom we pray or thank, therefore, the second part describes the characteristics of that God.

The following interpretation is of my own. The readers will wonder that it is different than that given by other scholars. It is so because most of them are the literal translations but mine is the interpretation.

1. *Ardaas* (Prayer) or Thanksgiving:

Our prayer² is before You, Oh God¹.
Our lives³ and bodies⁴, granted to us, are Your creations⁵ (blessings).
You are our Mother and Father and we are Your children.
With Your blessings, we have numerous joys⁶.

2. Who is that God to Whom we pray or thank?

Nobody knows Your limits (You are infinite).
You⁷, the God⁷, are the highest of the high.
Everything^{8,9} (matter and antimatter) in this universe is under Your Laws^{10, 11} (the Laws of Nature/Universe).
Everything is happening under Your Laws¹² (the Laws of Nature/Universe).
It is only You, Who knows Your State of Being¹³ and Limits¹⁴ (Infiniteness).
Nanak, the servant, sacrifices¹⁵ himself on You, the God.
 AGGS, M 5, p 268

[From 'Ardaas (Prayer)' article by Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal published in the January-February 2013 issue of The Sikh Bulletin.]